

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SAIGON 08402 121141 Z

43

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W
----- 046065

R 121000 Z MAY 73
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1598
INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMCONSUL CAN THO
CONCPAC
COMUSSAG

S E C R E T SAIGON 8402

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, CB, VS
SUBJECT: 32 ND FANK BRIGADE

REF: SAIGON 8352

1. I MET WITH PRIME MINISTER KHIEM THIS AFTERNOON AND DISCUSSED THE PROBLEM OF THE 15 TH FANK BRIGADE. THE PRIME MINISTER STATED THAT HE WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE SITUATION BUT HE AGREED WITH ME THAT LAUNCHING A HELIBORNE MOVE OF THIS UNIT FROM SOUTH VIETNAM TO TAKEO WOULD BE A BLATANT CEASEFIRE VIOLATION. HE RECALLED THE ATTENTION THE PRESS GAVE A BRIEF ARVN INTRUSION INTO CAMBODIA IN THAT AREA SEVERAL WEEKS AGO AND RECOGNIZED THAT A MOVEMENT OF THIS SIZE WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO CARRY OUT SECRETLY.

2. THE PRIME MINISTER IS MOST ANXIOUS TO BE HELPFUL TO FANK AND WE CONSIDERED DIFFERENT WAYS TO REPATRIATE THESE SOLDIERS AND THEIR FAMILIES. THE PRIME MINISTER SUGGESTED THAT THEY COULD BE MOVED OVERLAND TO RACH GIA AND THENCE BY SHIP TO KOMPONG SOM. HE ESTIMATED THAT THE OVERLAND MOVE WOULD TAKE FOUR OR FIVE HOURS AND COULD BE HANDLED DISCREETLY AT NIGHT.

3. IT WAS AGREED THAT THIS SUGGESTION WOULD BE STAFFED OUT BY THE
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DAO AND JGS HERE AND THAT WE WOULD SEEK PHNOM PENH' S AND THE DEPARTMENT' S VIEWS. CONGEN CAN THO HAS REPORTED THAT COLONEL HOANG DUC NINH, THE COMMANDER OF THE 44 TH STZ, BELIEVES THE 15 TH BRIGADE HAS LOST ITS WILL TO FIGHT AND THAT THE NEW COMMANDER, LTC CHAU BEN, IS ALREADY DEMORALIZED. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES IT DOES NOT APPEAR FROM HERE THAT THE 15 TH FANK BRIGADE WOULD MAKE MUCH OF A CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEFENSE OF TAKEO AND ITS MOVEMENT THROUGH SOUTH VIETNAM AND THEN TO THE NEAREST PORT IN CAMBODIA MIGHT WELL BE AN APPROPRIATE SOLUTION PROVIDED THE OPERATION WERE PRESENTED AS THE PEACEFUL REPATRIATION OF FANK SOLDIERS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS.

WHITEHOUSE

SECRET

NMAFVVZCZ

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** EXDIS

*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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